

Case Number:	CM14-0023109		
Date Assigned:	02/26/2014	Date of Injury:	08/12/2013
Decision Date:	07/14/2014	UR Denial Date:	02/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/25/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 65-year-old male with an 8/12/13 date of injury. At the time (1/15/14) of the request for authorization for H-wave unit trial, unspecified duration, there is documentation of subjective (lower back pain that radiates into bilateral lower extremities with numbness and tingling) and objective (paravertebral muscle spasm bilaterally and spinous process tenderness positive bilaterally, decreased lumbar active range of motion, positive Kemp's, positive Milgram's test, positive Valsalva, and decreased sensation posterior leg on the left) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar spine herniated nucleus pulposus with radiculopathy), and treatment to date (chiropractic treatment, physical therapy, medication, and failure of TENS). There is no documentation of chronic soft tissue inflammation and the H-wave unit will be used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

H-WAVE UNIT TRIAL, UNSPECIFIED DURATION: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines H-Wave Stimulation and Passive Therapy Page(s): 98-99,117.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation), Low Back Page(s): 117-118.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies that a one-month home-based trial of H-Wave stimulation may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option for chronic soft tissue inflammation used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and only following failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e., exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). In addition, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies that the effects and benefits of the one month trial should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) as to how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar spine herniated nucleus pulposus with radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e., exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). However, there is no documentation of chronic soft tissue inflammation and that the H-wave unit will be used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for H-wave unit trial, unspecified duration is not medically necessary.